A Goodly Feast. . . A Cup of Mellow Wine: Feasting in Bronze Age Cyprus
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A GOODLY FEAST . . . A CUP OF MELLOW WINE

Feasting in Bronze Age Cyprus

ABSTRACT

Recent studies have focused on the consumption of food and drink in antiquity, specifically employing anthropological perspectives to examine the social aspects of these activities. In light of these studies, I review in this article the evidence for feasting as a group activity in Cyprus during the third and second millennia B.C. and argue that the practice of feasting was used to reinforce group ties. The main focus is the impact of Mycenaean customs on indigenous Cypriot feasting practices between the 14th and 12th centuries B.C.

THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF FOOD AND DRINK

The consumption of food and drink represents more than the biological act of meeting necessary subsistence requirements, since it is also a culturally constructed social act.[1] Components of human diet are essentially anthropogenic; they are culturally transformed from their raw state into a transient element of material culture prior to consumption. Moreover, food and drink are symbolically charged because they represent embodied material culture, produced specifically to be ingested into the human body.[2] Indeed, Hamilakis comments that "humans as social entities make themselves through the consumption of food and drink."[3] Dining and drinking are the focus of social interaction both within the immediate household context and throughout the wider community.[4] The consumption of food and drink is used in the construction of social identities, shared experiences of consumption resulting in a corporate sense of identity.[5]

The social connotations of diet are culturally specific and are constructed according to modes of preparation, service, and consumption.

1. I am grateful to the Institute for Aegean Prehistory for funding my visit to the 103rd Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America, held in Philadelphia in January 2002, where an early version of this paper was presented. Particular thanks are due to James C. Wright for inviting me to take part in this very enjoyable and productive symposium on Mycenaean feasting, and to the *Hesperia* reviewers, Jeremy B. Rutter and Brian Hayden, for their helpful and informative comments and suggestions.

2. Dietler 2001, p. 72.
3. Hamilakis 1998, p. 116.
4. Hastorf 1991, p. 134.
5. Hamilakis 1998, p. 116.

Within these social codes we see the construction of food taboos: the definition of certain foods as clean or unclean, edible or inedible. Concepts of distinctive food tastes, accepted combinations of dietary elements in the construction of cuisines, and required modes of preparation and consumption are incorporated into concepts of ethnicity.[6] As a corollary, the associated paraphernalia used in the preparation, serving, and consumption of food and drink are also culturally specific. Similarly, the locations where these activities take place are defined within strict cultural norms, with food preparation areas frequently distinct from areas for dining and for the disposal of the debris of feasting. Even within certain social contexts these vary according to the context of consumption: distinctions in diet and eating habits may refer to internal cultural boundaries by reflecting gender differences, age distinctions, and social status. Special foods, different modes of preparation, and utensils might be used for religious ceremonies including rites of passage, religious festivals, and burial rites.[7]

Although diet is closely interwoven with expressions of cultural identity, it is an arena that is susceptible to modification as a result of outside influence. This is particularly apparent in the changing patterns of social dining in the Greek and Roman world brought about by increasing social and economic contact.[8] In archaeological contexts, changes in dietary practices, and thus the appearance of novel elements in the ceramic repertoire, are frequently attributed to the arrival of new population groups. One of the most frequently cited examples is the change in the Canaanite ceramic repertoire at the beginning of the Iron Age with the introduction of the Philistine Bichrome style, especially new forms such as the side-spouted strainer jug and the deep bowl or skyphos.[9] Changes in dietary practices and food preparation are further illustrated by the appearance of new types of cooking pot.[10] Alternative causal factors, however, should also be considered, in particular, the role of imported exotic commodities and esoteric knowledge in the construction of political and ideological power.[11] One such example is elite appropriation of imported, and thus exotic, alcoholic beverages and associated drinking equipment for use in exclusive high-status feasts.[12] This is exemplified by the spread of the symposium, and of the custom of dining in a reclining position, from the Near East to the Greek world during the Archaic period, and the dissemination of Greek and Phoenician drinking equipment and concepts of the Homeric banquet to central Italy.[13] Similarly, in Old Kingdom Egypt the elite used wine and drinking equipment imported from the southern Levant in exclusive diacritical drinking ceremonies.[14]

A clear distinction can be drawn between everyday consumption of staples within a household context and the larger ceremonial gatherings and ritual feasts that mark special occasions and define social relations. Feasts stand out from normal consumption practices by virtue of their location, the quantity and possibly the choice of food and drink consumed, and the associated paraphernalia, i.e., not only the dining services but also the dress and ornamentation of the participants.[15] Typically feasts might include luxury foodstuffs that were distinct from the staples consumed in everyday diet. While it might be prohibitive to rear livestock for consump-

6. Dietler 2001, p. 89.

7. James 1996, p. 80; Lindsay 2001, pp. 67–77.

8. See Dunbabin 2001.

9. Side-spouted jug: Dothan 1982, pp. 132–155, figs. 21–31, pls. 46–62; skyphos: Dothan 1982, pp. 98–102, figs. 3–7, pls. 2–7.

10. Killebrew 1999.

11. Helms (1988) has clearly demonstrated how knowledge of geographically distant places and foreign customs and consumption of exotica come under the domain of religious specialists and elites.

12. Dietler 1990, p. 386.

13. Joffe 1998, p. 307 (and references). See also Carter 1995 for a discussion of the possible spread of Levantine dining practices to the Aegean world as early as the Minoan-Mycenaean palatial period in the second millennium B.C.

14. Joffe 1998, p. 302.

15. Dietler 2001, p. 89.

tion of meat as a staple, numerous ethnographic studies have illustrated the prestige value of large livestock such as goats and, in particular, cattle, especially males with impressive coats and horns.[16] The consumption of meat within a feasting context is therefore something special, a highly symbolic display of wealth and status. Feasts might also be differentiated by the use of exotic foods, or foods with psychoactive properties, such as alcoholic beverages. The symbolic importance of alcoholic drinks derives in part from their peculiar mood-enhancing properties and from the process of manufacture, "a quasi-magical transformation of food into a substance that, in turn, transforms human consciousness."[17] Alcohol serves to construct "an ideal world" and is particularly appropriate for ceremonial consumption and the forging of alliances.[18] In terms of embodied material culture, therefore, alcohol occupies a privileged place, and its production and consumption are closely controlled.[19]

Feasts are major arenas for public display. They are visual pageants, occasions for music, dancing, recitation of epics, and shared consumption of the fruits of labor. The social and political functions of feasting are closely intertwined. Hospitality is used to establish and maintain social relations and to forge alliances, and feasts are frequently venues for the exchange of gifts.[20] Different modes of feasting are described in the ethnographic literature. At the basic level, food is shared within the household and with close kin. Some feasts incorporate the wider community. Not only do these feasts create shared sentiments of identity and belonging, but they are also occasions for social competition. Regular and lavish hospitality allows the host to accrue prestige and standing (symbolic capital) within a community. In effect, the enhancement of the host's standing within the community will "buy" influence over decisions made by the community. Hospitality may be reciprocal, with different individuals hosting feasts on a variety of occasions. Prestige and social standing are renegotiated in a continuous cycle of feasting—the so-called entrepreneurial, or empowering, feasts.[21] Such feasts might be used to create and maintain alliances within the community at different levels. Empowering, or work-party, feasts might also be used to mobilize labor. In effect a host will be able to mobilize a work force to complete a project, in return for which he or she provides food and drink. The more generous the reputation of the host, the greater the symbolic capital, and the more effective the work-party feast will be.[22]

Patron-role feasts are hosted by a single individual who asserts and maintains his elevated social position within the community, while the guests symbolically acknowledge their subordinate role through acceptance of the patron's hospitality. Effectively, patron-role feasts are used to proclaim and legitimize asymmetrical, hierarchical power systems.[23] Frequently, tribute of food and drink will be used to supply patron-role feasts. In the context of communal feasts, symbolic expression lies in the quantities of food and drink provided. In contrast to inclusive communal feasts, patron-role feasts allow hospitality to be manipulated to demonstrate exclusivity, such as social ranking, and also to facilitate alliance formation and demonstrate membership in social or political groupings (as illustrated by, e.g., the *marzeah* of Near Eastern sources and by the Greek symposium).[24]

16. Croft 1991, p. 74; Keswani 1994, pp. 257–260.

17. Dietler 2001, p. 73.

18. Sherratt 1997, pp. 388–392; Joffe 1998, p. 298.

19. Joffe (1998, pp. 298–304) notes such control for both ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia (and also for modern societies).

20. This can be seen, for example, in Early Dynastic Mesopotamia. Schmandt-Besserat (2001) argues that the palace banquets were major occasions for the presentation of offerings to the king and the gods, and indeed that these feasts played a central role in the palatial redistribution economy.

21. Dietler 1996, pp. 92–96; 2001, pp. 76–82.

22. Dietler 1996, pp. 93–95.

23. Dietler 1996, p. 97; 2001, pp. 82–85.

24. Carter 1995, p. 300, n. 54, p. 305.

Diacritical feasts are used as symbols of exclusive membership. These feasts are characterized by distinctive cuisine (exotic foods or complicated modes of preparation) and elaborate dining sets, and frequently make reference to specialized knowledge of external, exotic social practices as a means of demonstrating their exclusivity.[25] These elements of diacritical feasts make up a distinctive package of practices that are readily identifiable in the archaeological record. The symbolic force of the diacritical feast lies in its manipulation of an exclusive style that is closely guarded by the elite, through their privileged access to limited supplies of exotica. Even so, these practices are open to emulation on the part of groups aspiring to an elevated social status and we might expect a degree of fluidity in the choice of symbolic, ideological referents used by the elite.[26]

The development of increasingly sophisticated scientific techniques and the application of anthropological models to archaeological material have enhanced current interest in ancient diet and dining practices.[27] There are, however, numerous problems involved in exploring patterns of food consumption in the past, notably the distinction between staple consumption and feasting in an archaeological context.[28] In the Bronze Age Aegean and the ancient Near East, archaeological material is supplemented by textual sources and a rich corpus of representational material.[29] In the absence of detailed iconography and written documents, however, the only source of evidence available for analysis is the archaeological record. This includes concentrations of the debris of food and drink together with specialized apparatus for their service and consumption, patterns of differential disposal of faunal remains, and possibly the identification of specialized locations for these activities.

In the following discussion, I examine the evidence for feasting in Cyprus during the third and second millennia B.C. Given the limited textual and iconographic data available, emphasis is on the archaeological remains, which range in date from the Chalcolithic period through the Late Bronze Age.[30] The time span allows us to identify indigenous, intrinsically Cypriot aspects of consumption and to assess the extent to which changing practices are a result of internal social transformations rather than external influence.

25. Dietler 2001, pp. 85–86; see also Helms 1988 for a discussion of elite control of esoteric knowledge and the exotic.

26. Dietler 2001, pp. 86–88.

27. New techniques for studying archaeozoological and archaeobotanical assemblages include residue analysis of pottery and isotope analysis of human bones; see Tzedakis and Martlew 1999. Of particular interest to the discussion of exclusive, diacritical feasts is the evidence gleaned from the skeletal remains in the two grave circles at Mycenae. Stable isotope analysis indicates that the high-status males from these grave circles had privileged access to marine foods and consumed more of these than either the women buried in the grave circles or the adults (of indeterminate sex) buried in the LH I–II chamber tombs at Mycenae (Tzedakis and Martlew 1999, pp. 222–223, 226–227, 230–231).

28. Dietler 1996, pp. 98–99; 2001, p. 89.

29. For Aegean iconography, see Carter 1995; Rehak 1995; Wright, this volume. For Aegean textual data, see Palmer 1994; Palaima, this volume. Schmandt-Besserat (2001, pp. 391–395), for example, has explored the context and pattern of Sumerian feasting with reference to images of banqueting in glyptic art and on the Royal Standard of Ur; she also discusses (pp. 397–401) early mythological and economic texts.

30. The chronological and cultural distinction between the Early and Middle Cypriot periods (Early and Middle Bronze Age) has yet to be clearly defined. For the purposes of this article I refer to the two periods collectively as the "prehistoric Bronze Age," following Knapp 1990, p. 154. This time period is distinct from the subsequent Late Cypriot (LC) period, or Late Bronze Age (LBA) in terms of material culture, settlement pattern, and socioeconomic organization.

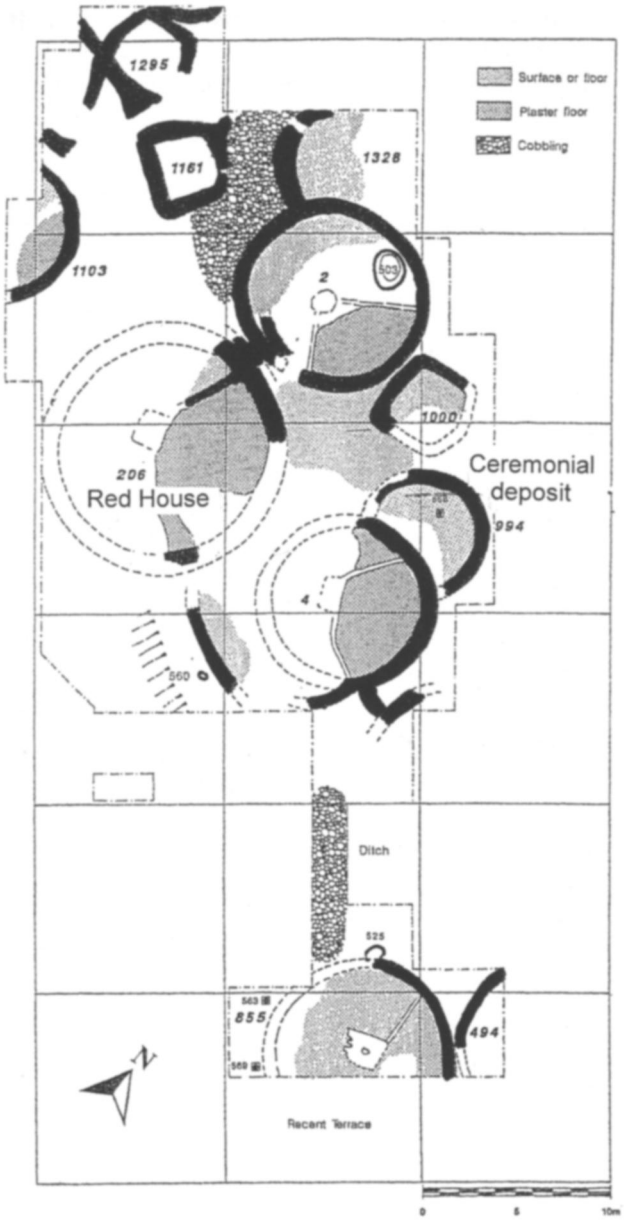

Figure 1. Plan of the ceremonial area at Kissonerga-Mosphilia. After Peltenburg et al. 1998, fig. 31

CHALCOLITHIC AND PREHISTORIC BRONZE AGE

Recently Peltenburg has suggested that evidence for communal feasting on Cyprus can be identified as early as the Middle Chalcolithic period, specifically in specialized structures within the spatially discrete ceremonial area at Kissonerga-Mosphilia (Fig. 1).[31] This area provided an arena for the performance of ritual in the open air, as well as a series of architecturally distinctive and functionally specialized houses of symbolic significance, most notably the so-called Red House. A large number of bowls (Fig. 2) were found in this structure, including vessels used for display in serving food, suggestive of ceremonial competitive feasting.[32]

The dietary components, and in particular the beverages, of these feasts have not been identified. There is no evidence for the introduction

31. Peltenburg 2001, pp. 129–133.
32. Bolger 1998, pp. 125–126; Peltenburg 1998, p. 248.

Figure 2. Decorated Red-on-White ware bowls from Kissonerga-Mosphilia. After Peltenburg et al. 1998, figs. 63, 64

of orchard husbandry to Cyprus prior to the Bronze Age, and any alcoholic beverage probably would not have been made from grapes. Similarly, cattle husbandry was only introduced to the island during the Early Bronze Age, and faunal assemblages suggest that caprines and fallow deer were the main meat components of the Cypriot diet in the Chalcolithic period. Presumably meat was not a staple but was restricted to specialized consumption in feasting contexts.[33] An unexpectedly high ratio of adult males to females among the caprines is represented in the faunal assemblages of Chalcolithic settlements. If herds were being bred for either their meat potential or milk products, a higher ratio of females might be expected. Wool production, on the other hand, should result in an equal ratio of males and females. The faunal assemblage, however, implies a rather uneconomical breeding strategy, with the maintenance of herds of goats with full-grown males. It is likely that adult male goats were desirable as a symbolic statement of social status, wealth, and prestige, and valued for their horns and coats.[34]

Major social, economic, and cultural transformations in Cyprus at the beginning of the Late Chalcolithic period foreshadow the developments of the subsequent Bronze Age.[35] These are particularly evident in the ceremonial or ritual arena, indicating a major shift in the underlying ideological system. Most notably, Cyprus was beginning to emerge from cultural isolation and to come in contact with populations of southwest Anatolia. One of the most marked changes is evident in pottery production—in particular, the introduction of bowls and flasks in a new monochrome style (Fig. 3).[36] These vessels include specialized containers for a new liquid commodity; the concentration of spouted flasks in building 7 at Lemba-Lakkous, associated with a complex of basins and grinding equipment, is very suggestive of beer production.[37] The development of some form of patron/elite control of food production is illustrated by the large-

33. See discussion in Keswani 1994.
34. Croft 1991, p. 74.
35. See, e.g., Peltenburg et al. 1998.
36. Bolger 1994, p. 13; 1998, p. 120.
37. Peltenburg et al. 1985, pp. 121–122, 328; Keswani 1994, pp. 266–267.

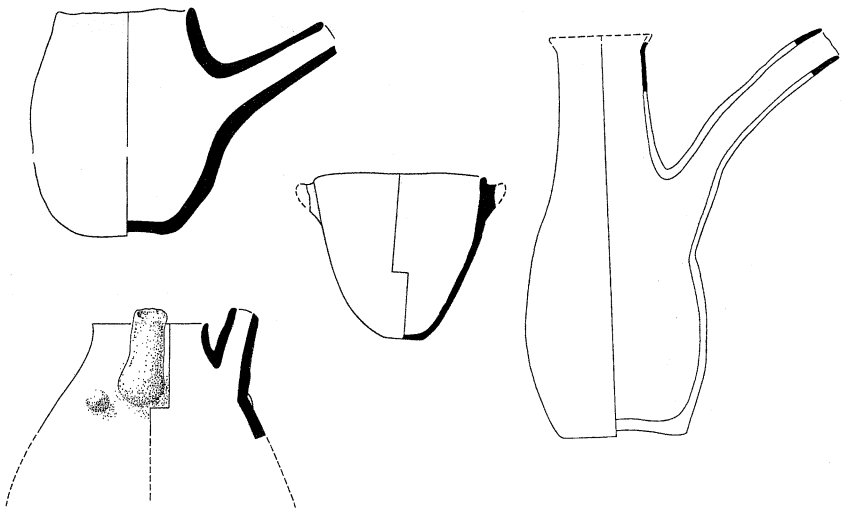

Figure 3. Late Chalcolithic monochrome feasting equipment from Kissonerga-Mosphilia. After Peltenburg et al. 1998, fig. 71

scale storage facilities in the Pithos House at Kissonerga-Mosphilia.[38] The faunal assemblage recovered from this building, with a high incidence of deer bone *(Dama mesopotamica),* is atypical of the Late Chalcolithic period. Peltenburg suggests that hunting had become a high-status activity in this period, controlled by the occupants of the Pithos House.[39] Alternatively, this building may have been associated specifically with communal feasting. Deer was not a staple dietary element but might have been consumed as part of a ceremonial ritual. On the basis of available archaeological evidence, Chalcolithic feasting appears to have been conducted at a communal level. There is no clear evidence for exclusivity in location, consumption, or paraphernalia. Instead, these early feasting patterns comply with the criteria put forward for empowering and patron-role feasts.[40]

Certainly by the beginning of the Bronze Age, ceremonial drinking and group feasting formed an important element of Cypriot social practice. During this period Cyprus was characterized by small farming communities located in inland villages. The apparent social and cultural isolation that characterized the earlier prehistory of the island continued, with very little evidence for external contact. Internally there is little clear evidence for social stratification. Even so, Manning has interpreted funerary ritual as the major arena for display by an emergent elite.[41] He argues that this display is illustrated by conspicuous consumption of new metal artifacts (especially weapons) and the development of elaborate burial rituals, which incorporated a major feasting element. He emphasizes the appearance of a range of vessels specifically associated with storing, pouring, and serving liquids (Fig. 4), and the development of a number of elaborate multipiece vessels with exaggerated spouts. These, he suggests, were intended for the ceremonial consumption of exotic alcoholic drinks as part of an elite funerary feast that accentuated membership in the exclusive group being buried in these tombs.[42]

Further evidence for ceremonial feasting is indicated by the presence of quantities of cattle and caprine bones in funerary contexts. This pattern is particularly evident at Vounous, where large joints of meat were found in jars and basins, and also at Lapithos-Vrysi tou Barba.[43] The association

38. Peltenburg 1998, p. 252.
39. Peltenburg 1998, p. 253.
40. Dietler 1996, pp. 92–97 (empowering feasts are here referred to as entrepreneurial feasts); 2001, pp. 76–85. See discussion above.
41. Manning 1993, pp. 44–48.
42. Manning 1993, p. 45; Keswani 1994, pp. 270–271; Herscher 1997, pp. 31–34.
43. Keswani 1994, p. 270, table 4; Herscher 1997, pp. 31–32.

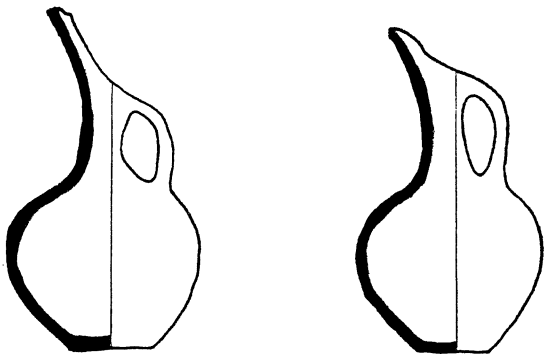

Figure 4. Philia Red Polished jugs with cutaway spouts from Khrysiliou-Ammos tomb 1.
After Bolger 1983, p. 64, fig. 3:1, 2

between cattle and ritual contexts—indicative of prestige display, sacrifice, and high-status feasting—is further illustrated by the well-known Vounous model and other rare representational ceramic models that were deposited in a small number of tombs and portray bucrania. Similarly, bovine protomes on bowls and spouted jugs denote the symbolic significance and ceremonial consumption of cattle.[44] Hunting continued to have prestigious connotations in the prehistoric Bronze Age, and deer commonly adorn Red Polished drinking vessels.[45] The consumption of food and drink within the context of funerary ritual is symbolically charged and enhances sensory participation on the part of the mourners. Funerary ritual appears to play a central role in the development of feasting practices in Bronze Age Cyprus. The close relationship between death and the consumption of food and drink is similarly apparent in the contemporary Aegean.[46]

The equipment and major dietary components of this feasting (cattle and possibly also alcoholic beverages such as wine) were introduced to the island from Anatolia. Rather than explaining these changes in the context of diffusion of population, it is preferable to view them in terms of the transferal of esoteric knowledge of exotic drinking customs and the novel use of external referents in the expression of identity and status. A similar phenomenon is evident in the contemporary southern Aegean, with the predominance of Anatolian drinking and pouring shapes among the ceramic repertoire of the Kastri group.[47] There is, however, a significant distinction in the nature and scale of contacts between Anatolia and Cyprus, on the one hand, and Anatolia and the southern Aegean, on the other. The pervasiveness of the "Anatolian" components in Cyprus, which involved extensive consumption of meat and display of bucrania, resulted in a major impact on the material culture, social organization, and economy of the island. In contrast, the Anatolian component of the Kastri material is more limited and is, in effect, represented by a discrete drinking set. Although there is evidence for the development of exclusive feasting activities on Cyprus during the prehistoric Bronze Age (including privileged access to symbolically charged representational material, sacrifice, consumption and display of cattle as part of funerary ceremonies, and possibly control over the consumption of novel alcoholic beverages), the difference between exclusive and communal feasting activities is indistinct, implying that the social boundaries defined by these feasting patterns were fluid.

44. Morris 1985, pp. 190–200, pls. 219–222; Keswani 1994, pp. 268, 270–271.

45. Morris 1985, pp. 185–189, pls. 215, 216.

46. Hamilakis 1998.

47. Broodbank 2000, pp. 310–313. Broodbank (p. 311) suggests that the mimicking of Anatolian culture as represented by the Kastri group is part of a wider phenomenon of increasing infiltration of exotic materials, technologies, and ideas into the Aegean.

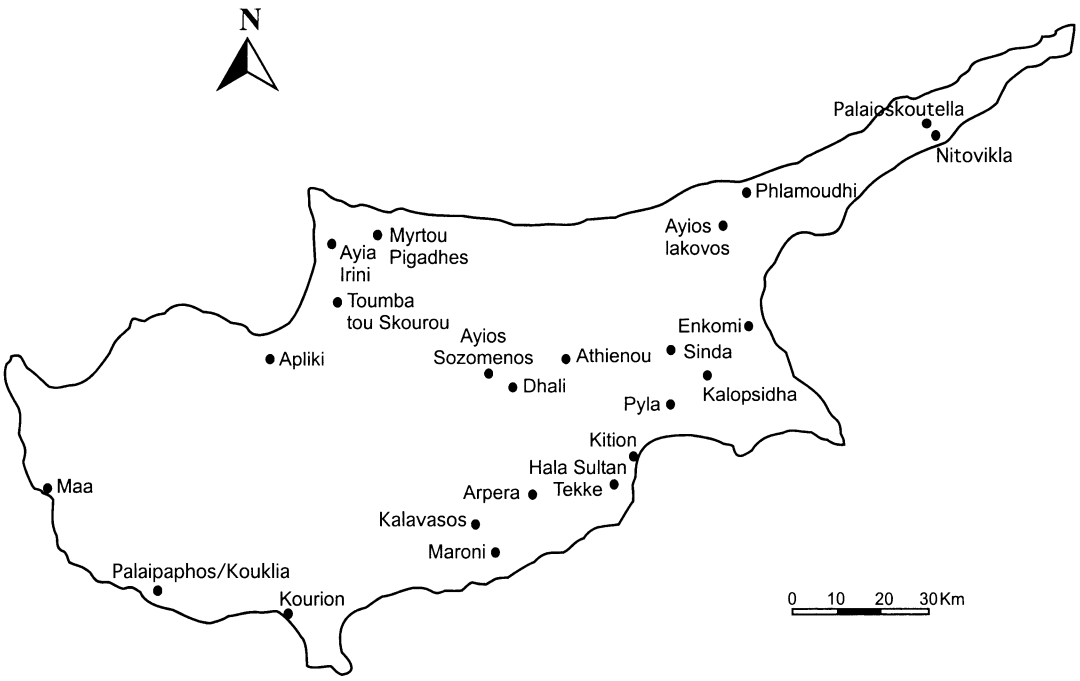

Figure 5. Map of Late Bronze Age Cyprus. D. Druce

LATE BRONZE AGE

Cyprus is characterized during the Late Bronze Age by considerable societal and economic changes, most notably increasing social complexity, the establishment of important urban centers along the southern coast (Fig. 5), and the integration of the island into the extensive trading networks of the eastern Mediterranean (possibly as a major diplomatic player). The syncretic nature of Late Cypriot (LC) society is clearly illustrated by the use of external referents in the construction of elite identities. Aegeanizing and orientalizing prestige goods are common in the elite burials of the coastal urban centers.[48] A particularly intriguing axis of cultural and economic interaction existed between Mycenaean Greece, Ugarit, and Cyprus. This is especially evident in the ivory-working school of the 13th century, but is also reflected in the importation of Mycenaean pottery to Cyprus and Ugarit, which occurs at a larger scale than elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean.[49]

The Cypriot agricultural base continued with very little change from the earlier Bronze Age. The dietary staples were cereals (wheat and barley) and lentils. There is also unequivocal evidence for the introduction of orchard husbandry to Cyprus at this time, specifically the cultivation of

48. Keswani 1989a, pp. 58–59.

49. On the ivory-carving school, see Hood [1978] 1988, pp. 130–131, fig. 122. For discussion of the trade in Mycenaean pottery, see Sherratt 1999. For large-scale importation of Mycenaean pottery to Ugarit, see most recently Yon, Karageorghis, and Hirschfeld 2000; van Wijngaarden 2002, pp. 37–73. For Mycenaean pottery in Cyprus, see van Wijngaarden 2002, pp. 125–202; Steel, forthcoming.

olives and grapes.[50] Given the evidence for wine production and consumption in the contemporary Aegean, and the long history of wine production in the Levant, it seems likely that wine was also produced in Cyprus, although this has not yet been confirmed through residue analyses of LC pottery.[51]

Archaeozoological remains indicate that sheep, goat, cattle, and pig were all bred,[52] although it is unclear to what extent meat products were incorporated within the LC diet as staples. Based on the profile of bones recovered from two wells at Kouklia-Evreti, Halstead argues that while sheep and cattle were raised for their secondary products (wool and traction power), goat was primarily raised for meat.[53] Even so, consumption of sheep and cattle was strictly controlled. Indeed, the continuing symbolic importance of cattle in LBA Cyprus is indicated by the totemic use and public display of bucrania, usually in sanctuaries but also to mark the limits of the settlement at Morphou.[54] Deer, which had played an important role in Cypriot subsistence practices from the Neolithic, are rare in LC contexts (although deer bones have been found at Myrtou-Pigadhes, Kouklia-Evreti, and Maa-Palaiokastro),[55] and they played only a very limited role in LC cuisine. Croft notes that very few animal bones littered the settlement contexts at Kalavasos, illustrative of formalized disposal practices[56] and possibly strict control over the distribution and consumption of meat products. This pattern indicates a degree of control more typical for luxury commodities used in feasting than for everyday staples.

A closer look at two LBA deposits interpreted as feasting debris, at Kalavasos and Kouklia, provides further information. A rich deposit of animal bones and seeds was found in a possible latrine (A173) in the administrative building X at Kalavasos-Ayios Dhimitrios (Fig. 6). Seed remains of lentil, fig, grape, and olive were found in association with bones of sheep or goat, apparently derived from joints of meat, together with game bird and fish bones.[57] The fill also contained a large number of restorable vessels, with an unusually high incidence of Mycenaean imports.[58] Open vessels, such as cups and bowls, were predominant. For the most part these were complete or intact, suggesting rapid accumulation of the ceramics. The context (the elite, administrative quarter of the site) and the composition of the environmental remains and ceramic assemblage imply that elite feasting took place within the settlement at Kalavasos. The sym-

50. At Kalavasos-Ayios Dhimitrios, for example, domesticated grape pips were found in building I, associated with a sunken pithos, and in buildings III, VIII, and IX; olive was found in buildings VIII, X, and especially in building IX (Hansen 1989, pp. 82–92). Olive is also reported at Hala Sultan Tekke (Hjelmqvist 1979) and Apliki (Helbaek 1962), and domesticated grape at Kalopsidha (Helbaek 1966) and Hala Sultan Tekke (Hjelmqvist 1979).

Hamilakis (1996; 1999, p. 45) questions whether the olive had culinary value in the Bronze Age Aegean, arguing that its primary use was to manufacture the luxury perfumed oils that were so prized in Aegean palatial society and that these played an important role in rituals of competitive consumption and gift exchange. This argument might be extended to LBA Cyprus, where there is substantive evidence for oil production, in particular at Kalavasos-Ayios Dhimitrios (Hansen 1989, p. 89; Keswani 1992).

51. Joffe 1998; Tzedakis and Martlew 1999, pp. 142–179.

52. Halstead 1977; Croft 1989; Larje 1992.

53. Halstead 1977, pp. 265–268.

54. Reese 1990, pp. 390–391; Webb 1999, pp. 251–252.

55. Zeuner and Cornwall 1957, pp. 97–98; Halstead 1977, p. 267; Croft 1988.

56. Croft 1989, p. 70.

57. South 1988, p. 227; South and Russell 1993, pp. 304–306.

58. South and Russell 1993, p. 306.

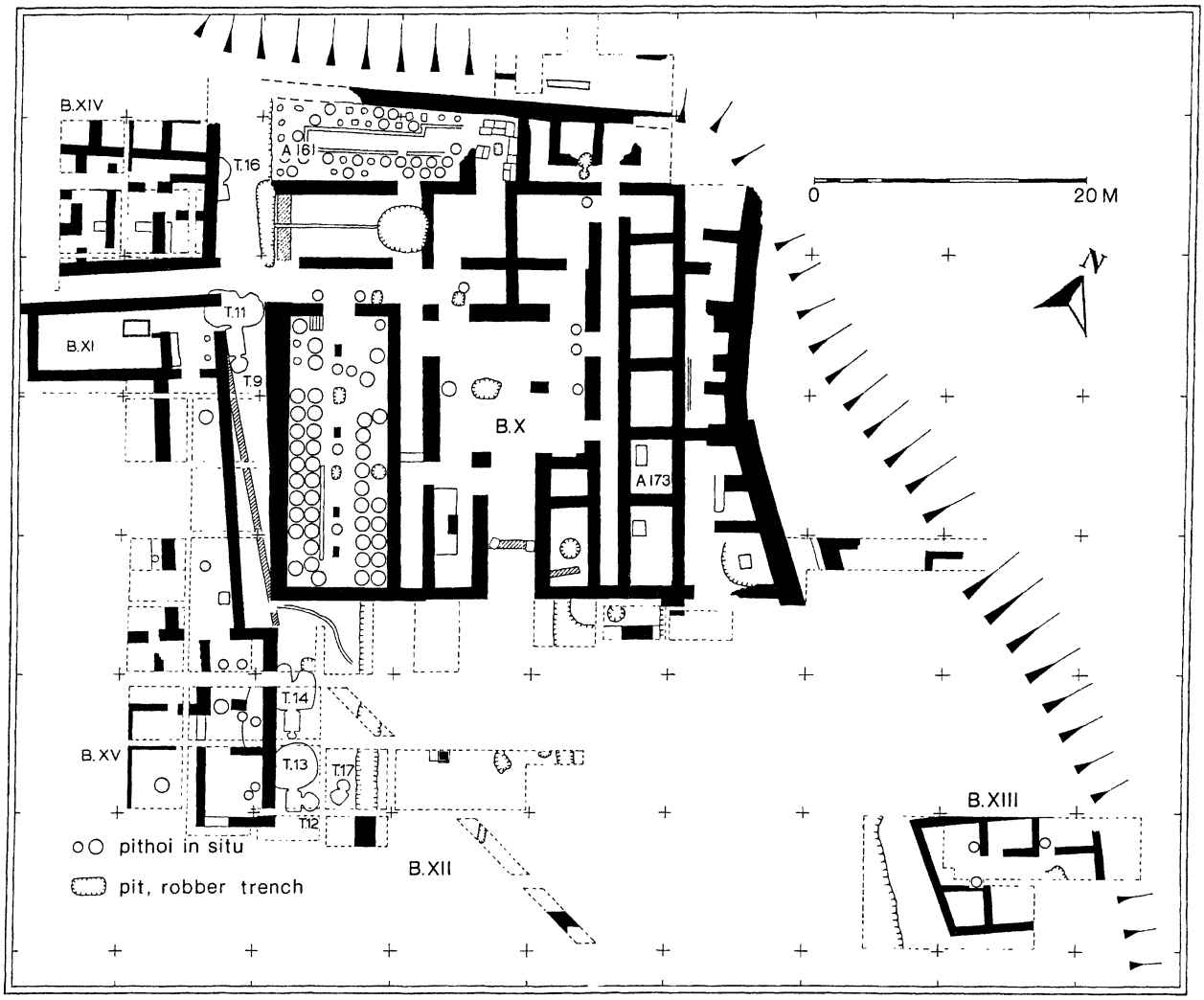

Figure 6. Plan of Kalavasos-Ayios Dhimitrios, northeast area, showing location of A173. After South and Todd 1997, p. 73, fig. 1

bolic force for this LC feast derives from the "architectonically distinguished setting" and the use of exotic dining equipment; the feasting debris evidently embodies "exclusive and unequal commensal circles."[59]

Clear differentiation between the debris of everyday consumption and the disposal of the remnants of feasting is illustrated by the composition of two wells, TE III and TE VIII, excavated at Kouklia-Evreti. The composition of the fill of TE VIII is typical of settlement debris accumulated over a long period of time.[60] The bones, for example, are extremely fragmentary. In contrast, the bones from TE III were well preserved and, in some cases, articulated, implying the rapid accumulation of material from a single event prior to deposition.[61] This interpretation is substantiated by the preservation of the associated pottery, which included pieces from restorable vessels distributed throughout the deposit.[62] The character of the fill of TE III is suggestive of debris from a single feasting event, as has been proposed for A173 at Kalavasos. Halstead argues that the rapid accumulation of bones indicates large-scale consumption of meat, and represents either the debris from dining or a communal (nonexclusive) festival.[63] The profiles of the deposits of TE III at Kouklia and A173 at

59. Dietler 2001, pp. 85–86.

60. Based on the range of animals consumed and deposited in TE VIII, I would, nonetheless, argue that the deposit comprises the debris of elite dining, although not necessarily from a single exclusive diacritical feast.

61. Halstead 1977, pp. 269–270.

62. Halstead 1977, p. 271.

63. Halstead 1977, p. 271.

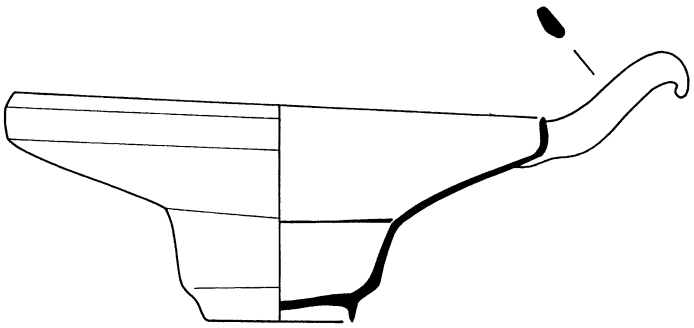

Figure 7. Base Ring II carinated cup.
After Mee and Steel 1998, no. 66, pl. 11

Kalavasos are strikingly similar, suggesting culturally constructed methods of disposing of feasting debris in LBA Cyprus. Formalized deposition of such debris is also indicated by the accumulation of fineware ceramics in wells at Hala Sultan Tekke and Palaipaphos.[64]

At Kouklia, the proximity of the two wells to a sanctuary places the feasting and dining events associated with the deposits within a specialized, liminal context. Moreover, the range of animals deposited is not typical of LC faunal assemblages: large quantities of fallow deer were found in both wells. The elite connotations of deer, already evident in the Late Chalcolithic period, apparently persisted into the Late Bronze Age. Hunting was an elite pastime, and while deer no longer played an important role in daily diet, they had immense symbolic significance in exclusive feasts. Cattle are also plentiful in both deposits. The many horns in TE III[65] suggest that symbolic consumption and display of animal wealth played an important role in LC feasting. Worked astragali from the deposit may indicate that gaming or fortune-telling took place.[66] The combination of cattle and deer bones has also been identified in a well at Kalavasos (A26),[67] an atypical finding for the site that suggests specialized patterns of consumption similar to those proposed for the Kouklia wells.

The practice of feasting is further implied by the range of ceramics used in specific contexts. No clear evidence points to specific structures having been used as dining rooms or feasting halls. Nevertheless, the repeated combination of specific ceramic forms in a variety of contexts is suggestive of communal drinking practices. The LC drinking set comprised kraters, jugs and tankards for serving liquids, and bowls. Although no direct evidence substantiates an association with alcoholic beverages, the repeated combinations of these forms imply the social importance of the consumption of certain liquids.

Alcoholic beverages are an important element in social display and competitive feasting.[68] It is entirely plausible that wine (which had a long history of consumption in the Near East) was the preferred beverage in Cyprus, and also that the dissemination of this beverage was strictly controlled by certain elements of LC society. Initially the indigenous finewares (Base Ring and White Slip) were used both for serving and consumption of liquids. By the 14th and 13th centuries, however, there is considerable evidence from both settlement and funerary contexts for the incorporation of Mycenaean forms into the Cypriot drinking set.[69] The impact of Mycenaean drinking vessels is rather erratic and there was a marked tendency to favor the indigenous Base Ring cups (Fig. 7). These

64. Öbrink 1979; Maier 1997, p. 101.

65. Halstead 1977, p. 270.

66. In this context we should note the importance of astragali in LC sanctuaries and tomb groups. See Halstead 1977, p. 271; Webb 1999, p. 250; South 2000, p. 355.

67. Croft 1989, p. 70.

68. Joffe 1998, p. 298; Dietler 2001, pp. 73–74.

69. Steel 1998, pp. 291–292.

Figure 8. Mycenaean pictorial krater from Enkomi. Courtesy Cyprus Museum, Nicosia

cups are particularly common in sanctuary contexts, where it has been argued that they might have been used for pouring libations.[70] They were the preferred Cypriot drinking cup and the shape would have been particularly suited for drinking wine, as the sediment would settle in the central cavity, leaving a clear liquid at the top.[71] Even so, there is a concentration of Mycenaean drinking vessels (including kylikes, cups, and bowls) in A173 at Kalavasos and in the wells at Kouklia that probably derive from elite feasting events.[72] In most contexts the choice of drinking vessel remained idiosyncratic and an element of personal choice, at least until the later 13th century, when Mycenaean shallow bowls and local imitations gradually became predominant.

The Mycenaean krater (Fig. 8) had an enormous impact on the Cypriot ceramic repertoire, and presumably also on the practice of competitive feasting/drinking.[73] The open krater, amphoroid krater, and bell krater were all imported. Occasionally they are found in settlement contexts, as in well deposits at Hala Sultan Tekke.[74] For the most part, however, they occur in funerary contexts, and they were certainly a prerequisite element for inclusion in high-status burials in the coastal urban centers. This pattern might seem to suggest that the Mycenaean krater had little impact on activities within the settlement, but use-wear analysis indicates that these vessels were used over a lengthy period before they were deposited in tombs.[75]

The limited occurrence of Mycenaean kraters within the settlement reflects their prestigious connotations. Rather than serving as items of everyday use, the kraters were carefully curated and used only on specific occasions, such as ceremonial feasts. The krater formed the centerpiece of the LC drinking set. It was primarily intended for display, hence the preference for kraters with elaborate pictorial decoration, especially chariot scenes referring to elite lifestyles. These objects were deliberately removed from circulation and deposited in tombs as elements of elite funerary

70. Vaughan 1991, p. 124.
71. Russell 1986, p. 66.
72. Kalavasos: South and Russell 1993, p. 306; Kouklia: Maier 1983, pp. 229–230; 1997, pp. 93–95.
73. Steel 1998, p. 293.
74. Öbrink 1979, p. 54, fig. 138.
75. Keswani 1989b, p. 562.

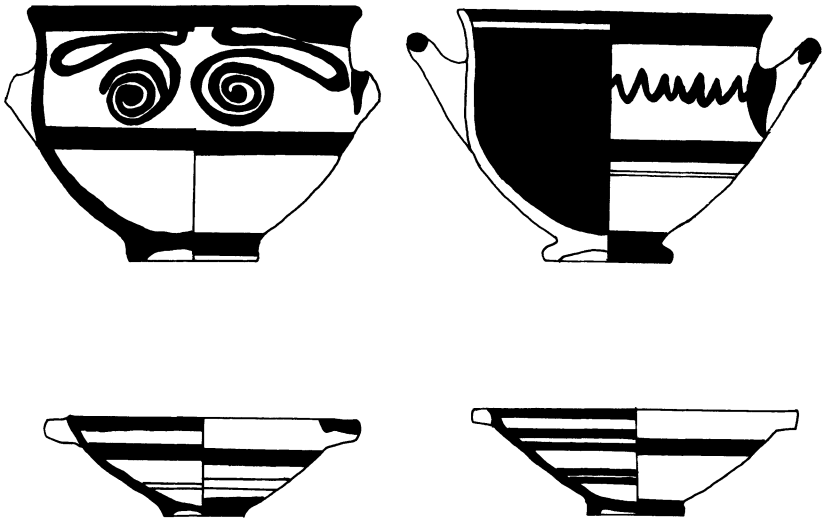

Figure 9. WPWM III pottery from Kouklia: skyphoi *(top)* and shallow bowls. After Maier 1973, pp. 70, 74, figs. 2, 7; Kling 1989, p. 161, fig. 20:1a, c

display, further enhancing their prestigious status. Although jugs (either local wares or Mycenaean imports) are also found, it appears that the more common Cypriot practice was to serve the wine or other liquid directly from the krater. Bowls have been found inside kraters at Enkomi (Swedish Expedition tombs 6 and 18) and Kalavasos.[76] Although Mycenaean pottery is the preferred tableware for LC competitive feasting, it appears that the Cypriot elite did not emulate the cultural practices and feasting paraphernalia of the Mycenaean palatial elite, who preferred drinking equipment of gold or silver.[77] Instead, the Cypriots used Mycenaean imports according to local practices and taste, and appear to have been referencing Ugaritic patterns of wine consumption.[78] The Cypriot elite thus invested the krater with the symbolic connotations of belonging to an exclusive commensal group with esoteric knowledge of foreign patterns of consumption.[79] They also strictly limited the circulation of the Mycenaean krater to elite display and consumption; this exclusivity is likewise evident in the pictorial decoration of the kraters.[80]

The greatest impact of Mycenaean drinking equipment on the Cypriot assemblage was during the later 13th and 12th centuries B.C. The prevalence of locally produced "Mycenaean-style" (White Painted Wheelmade [WPWM] III) pottery in LC IIC–IIIA contexts—skyphoi, shallow bowls, and kraters—is striking and it is noteworthy that the primary "Mycenaeanizing" forms are those associated with dining (Fig. 9).[81] Although this phenomenon has traditionally been attributed to demic diffusion, recent studies have emphasized change in local pottery production and style.[82]

76. South and Todd 1997, p. 73.

77. See Wright, this volume.

78. This is inferred from the high incidence of Mycenaean kraters and drinking vessels recovered from both settlement and funerary contexts at Ugarit; cf. Yon, Karageorghis, and Hirschfeld 2000, pp. 12–15. The representation on a Ugaritic vessel of Yarim approaching El clearly illustrates the Ugaritic mode of consumption (Courtois 1969, p. 111, fig. 13). A krater is placed on a tripod or table in front of the seated god, El, who is drinking from a kylix-shaped vessel. Yarim is holding a dipper jug, possibly for serving the beverage contained in the krater or for pouring a libation to El.

79. Helms 1988; Dietler 2001, p. 86.

80. Steel 1998, pp. 292–294; 1999, p. 808; Yon, Karageorghis, and Hirschfeld 2000, pp. 12–13.

81. Cadogan 1991, p. 170; Sherratt 1991, p. 192.

82. See, e.g., Sherratt 1991 (and references).

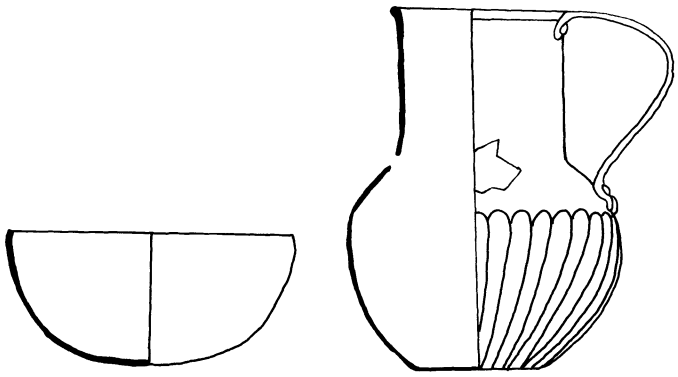

Figure 10. Metal drinking set from Hala Sultan Tekke tomb 23. After Niklasson 1983, pp. 204–205, figs. 489, 490

It appears that the WPWM III drinking sets illustrate a shift in style, and emulation of the previously exclusive Mycenaean forms. In contrast to the restricted distribution of imported Mycenaean kraters apparent in LC IIA–B, the WPWM III dining sets occur widely, suggesting that they were readily available in antiquity, and that a shift in the symbolic style used for diacritical feasting had taken place.[83] Mycenaean dinner services fell out of favor with the Cypriot elite and from LC IIC to LC IIIA, the new prestigious form was the metal drinking set (e.g., Fig. 10).[84]

Much of the evidence for LC drinking sets derives from funerary assemblages and sanctuaries. Certainly, the provision of drinking sets was essential for LC tomb groups but it is unclear whether they were used for funerary feasts or intended as equipment for the deceased. The ceramic vessels from LC tombs are largely intact, however, implying that they were funerary offerings to the deceased rather than the debris of funerary feasts in their honor or objects for communing with the ancestors. Food was deposited in tomb groups[85] and there is some evidence that animal sacrifice and feasting on the part of the mourners was an integral element of funerary ritual—an embodied practice within a liminal location defining relations between the mourners, the deceased, and the ancestors.[86] Animal bones and sherds were recovered from areas of intense burning overlying the sealed chambers of tombs I and II at Morphou-Toumba tou Skourou. Tumuli at Korovia-Palaioskoutella covered complexes of basins and pits containing splinters of animal bone in a matrix of sticky soil and ash, apparently the residue of libations (of wine or oil?) and animal sacrifice.[87]

In sanctuary contexts open forms predominate, but their associated activities remain elusive. The shape most generally associated with LC

83. Dietler 1996, p. 98; 2001, p. 86.

84. Keswani 1989a, p. 65. The bronze drinking sets that became the preferred drinking equipment during the 13th and 12th centuries on Cyprus reflect southern Levantine and Egyptian influence. This is clearly seen by comparing the equipment deposited in Hala Sultan Tekke tomb 23 (Niklasson 1983, pp. 204–205, figs. 488–490) with that found in the burials at Deir el-Balah (Dothan 1979, pp. 66–69, figs. 148–151).

85. At Kalavasos, for example, sheep/goat, bird, and fish bone have been identified. See Croft 1989, pp. 70–71; South 2000, pp. 352, 361.

86. See the discussion on mortuary feasting and embodiment in Hamilakis 1998, pp. 115–119.

87. Webb 1992, pp. 92–93.

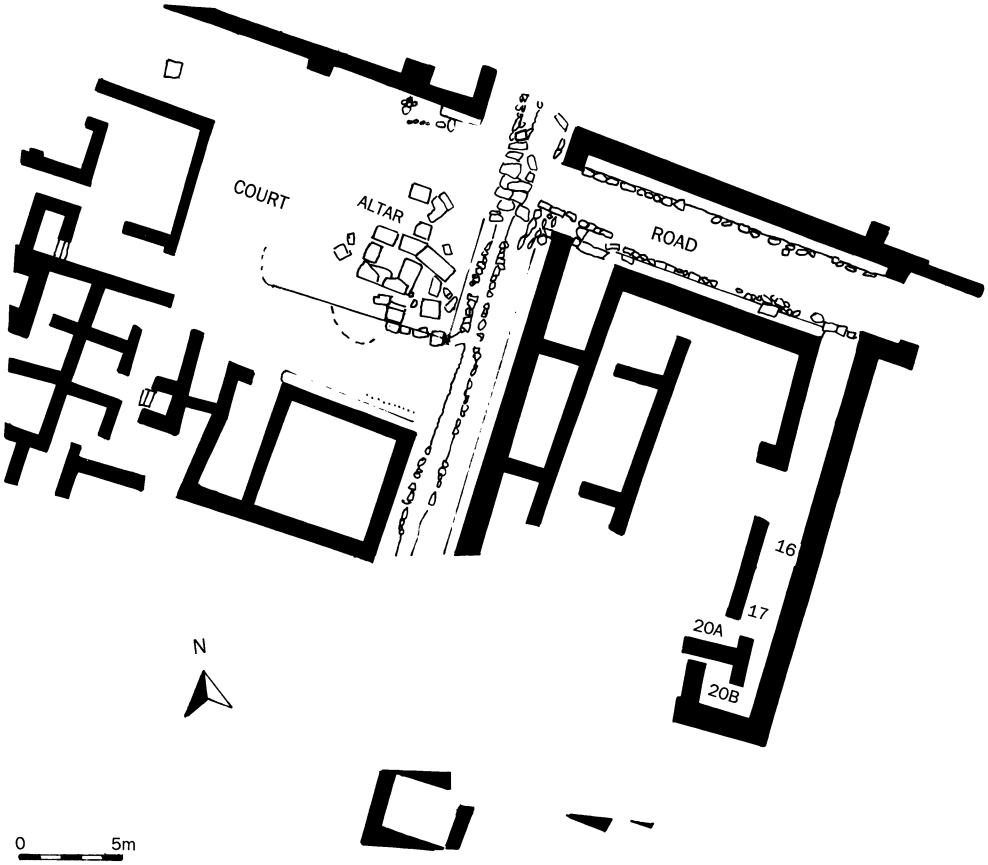

Figure 11. Plan of Myrtou-Pigadhes.
After Taylor 1957, p. 11, fig. 7

cult practice is the Base Ring II carinated cup (see above, Fig. 7).[88] Possibly these cups were used in the performance of cult, such as feasting by the worshippers and offering of libations to the deities. Mycenaean bowls are more unusual, but occur in small quantities. For example, a concentration of Mycenaean pottery in the courtyard area of the sanctuary at Myrtou-Pigadhes in front of the altar (Fig. 11) included 12 open forms: deep bowls (Furumark shapes [FS] 284–285), shallow bowls (FS 296), cups (FS 220), a kylix (FS 256–259), and possibly two bell kraters (FS 281).[89] These may be interpreted as the residue of ceremonial activity incorporating consumption and display. Other elements of the Mycenaean drinking set were found in small quantities in the subsidiary rooms, but these were greatly outnumbered by the indigenous forms, in particular the Base Ring carinated cup. In everyday patterns of dining and ritual consumption within sanctuaries, the preferred drinking vessel was the indigenous Base Ring cup. Although kraters are not found in large numbers they are present in most ritual deposits[90] and Webb argues that they were used as cult equipment,

88. Webb 1999, pp. 189–192. See, e.g., the large number of Base Ring cups from the sanctuary at Myrtou-Pigadhes (Catling 1957, pp. 36–38, fig. 18). This form continued to be the ritual vessel of choice into the earliest phase of the Cypriot Iron Age, even after Base Ring ware ceased to be produced, as is amply illustrated by the finds from the Sanctuary of the Ingot God at Enkomi. The typical Base Ring carinated cup is found in large quantities in the 11th-century deposits at the site, but made in a plain, coarseware fabric. See, e.g., Courtois 1971, pp. 254–256, figs. 93, 94:a–c, e–i, l–m, 95:b–d. A similar phenomenon is also evident at Kouklia (Jones and Catling 1986, p. 595).

89. Catling 1957, pp. 42–48, fig. 20.

90. In addition to the two bell kraters reported at Myrtou-Pigadhes, there were four possible amphoroid kraters (FS 53–55); Catling 1957, pp. 42–44, fig. 20.

for example in libation ceremonies.[91] Given the prevalence of drinking equipment and the common occurrence of kraters in LC sanctuaries, it seems reasonable to interpret these assemblages as the material correlates of ritual/ceremonial feasting on the part of a religious hierarchy. Certainly, the range of pottery replicates the drinking equipment found in other contexts in LBA Cyprus. Moreover, the intoxicating properties of an alcoholic beverage like wine would have been appropriate for consumption in a ritual context.[92] The pottery, therefore, is indicative of a ceremonial, cultic context for the consumption of alcohol.

Further evidence for dining within a cultic context is furnished by the faunal assemblages from the sanctuaries. Animal bones are found in all cult assemblages. In most sanctuaries juvenile cattle *(Bos taurus)* are predominant, with smaller quantities of bird and fish bone,[93] but large quantities of deer *(Dama mesopotamica)* were recovered at Myrtou-Pigadhes.[94] The prevalence of certain bones—the skulls, horns (or antler), and long bones—illustrates the consumption of the primary meat-bearing parts of the animal within a religious context and also indicates that the animals were butchered away from the sanctuary. The long bones are possibly the debris of a sacrificial practice such as ritual feasting. At Myrtou-Pigadhes they are found in rooms 16, 17, and 20, together with a number of scapulas.[95] The associated pottery is appropriate to the presentation, service, and consumption of food and drink: Plain White offering stands, Base Ring carinated cups, bowls in a variety of wares, and jugs. The importance of dining as an element of religious ritual can be paralleled by similar activity in other cultural contexts, such as Late Bronze Age Crete, and Archaic and Classical Greece.[96] The accumulation of skulls, deer antler, and goat horns in the courtyard at Myrtou-Pigadhes, close to the altar,[97] more plausibly relates to symbolic display and is an integral element of Cypriot cult practices, possibly introduced during the prehistoric Bronze Age.[98] This form of display is not paralleled in sanctuaries in the contemporary Aegean.[99]

CONCLUSIONS

Communal feasting practices in Cyprus have a long pedigree, possibly stretching back into the Chalcolithic period, but were certainly established by the prehistoric Bronze Age. Salient characteristics of these feasting practices include symbolic consumption of meat—primarily beef, but also sheep and goat, and possibly deer—and the introduction of exotic alcoholic beverages. By the LC period, hierarchical divisions in society are defined through patterns of exclusive, diacritical feasting. These are marked by distinctive and exclusive locations for consumption, differential access to certain dietary products (cattle and deer), possibly strict control over consumption of wine, and certainly privileged access to exotic dining sets (Mycenaean kraters), which reference esoteric knowledge of Ugaritic dining practices. LC feasting activity is largely inferred from the ceramic assemblages found in tombs and sanctuaries, but the remains of diacritical feasts are also evident in certain settlement contexts, illustrating formalized patterns of the disposal of the debris of feasting.

91. Webb 1999, p. 197. Webb also notes the occurrence of a krater among a group of libation vessels on an Aegeanizing cylinder from Idalion.

92. Joffe 1998, p. 298; Dietler 2001, p. 73.

93. Webb 1999, pp. 250–252.

94. Zeuner and Cornwall 1957, pp. 97–98.

95. Zeuner and Cornwall 1957, p. 99. Similar debris from ceremonial feasting has been identified in the Mycenaean palace at Pylos: a concentration of burned bones (primarily long bones) associated with a number of miniature cups and kylikes found in room 7 (Isaakidou et al. 2002; Stocker and Davis, this volume).

96. Bergquist 1988; Lebessi and Muhly 1990, p. 327; Bookidis 1993.

97. Zeuner and Cornwall 1957, p. 97.

98. See discussion above.

99. J. B. Rutter (pers. comm.).

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